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ABSTRACT

One of a series of seven units designed to develop the reading and writing skills of low achievers in the social studies, this activity book focuses on the theme of religion. The booklet can be used for high school classes, individual study in alternative and continuing high schools, and adult education classes. An introduction to polytheism and monotheism precedes sections on Judaism, Islam, Mohammed, Christianity, and modern changes in religion. Each section contains a brief reading stressing vocabulary development and skill in distinguishing sounds. Writing activities are provided in the separate teacher's guide. (LP)

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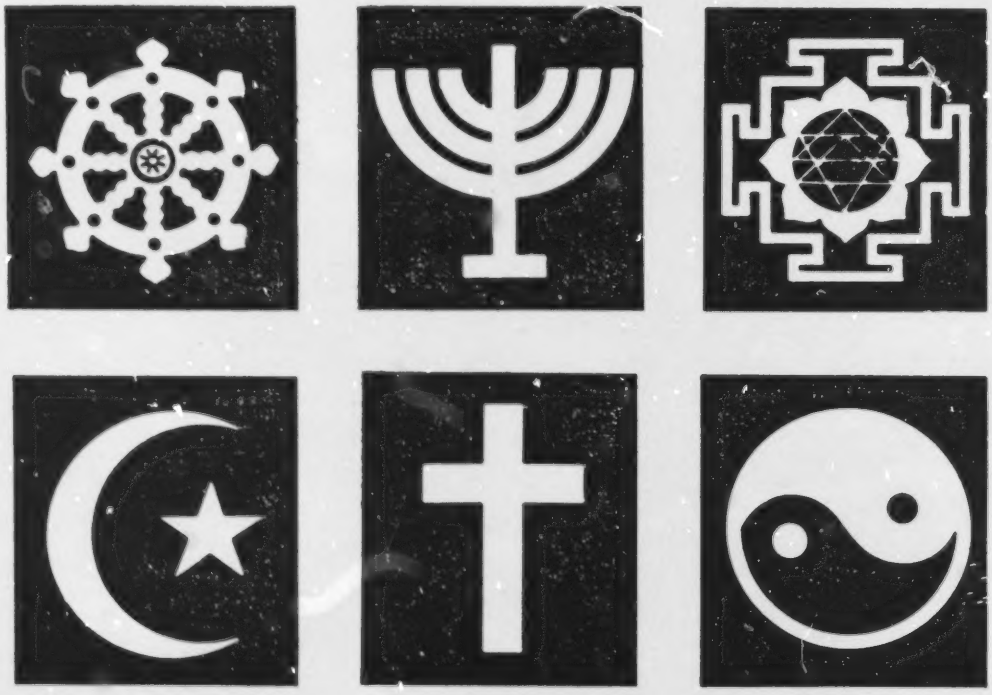
RELIGION THEME



Dennis J. Garrahy

VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

RELIGION

A. Sounds Introduced
   1. ox - x
   2. you - ou

B. Vocabulary

1. inhabited	7. messiah
2. polytheism	8. prophets
3. monotheism	9. bondage
4. accounts	10. persuade
5. wandering	11. predicted
6. Judaism	12. resources

The belief in gods is as old as man himself. From early times, man has believed in great gods from heaven. Men thought that strange faces existed in rocks and trees. The Greeks felt that gods inhabited Mount Olympus.

Man has come a long way from the days of believing in polytheism, or the belief in many gods. Now, man believes in monotheism, the worship of one God.

Monotheism began with the ancient Hebrews and was adopted by the Christians and the Moslems. There are seven great religions in the world today; in this unit we will try to understand four of those religions.

Accounts from the Bible provide the world with most of the information on the ancient Hebrews. The story tells that they began as a wandering tribe of people. The religion of the Hebrews, called Judaism, grew out of a firm belief that there is one God who created heaven and earth. This God chose one person, Abraham, and his descendents to teach all the world the idea of monotheism.

The early Hebrews called God by the name of Yahweh and felt that he only belonged to them. In time, many prophets or great religious teachers would change the original idea of Yahweh. One such prophet was a man called Amos. Amos taught that the god of the Hebrews belonged to all people and wanted justice for all men.

At first the Hebrews lived on a small strip of land, on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. They called it Canaan. Others named it Palestine, today it is called Israel. When famine broke out in Canaan, the Hebrews moved to neighboring Egypt. After a while the Egyptians made them slaves.

One day, a great prophet named Moses came forward to lead the Hebrews from bondage under Pharoah. Moses tried several times to persuade Pharoah to set the Hebrews free. Each time he refused Moses' request. After the tenth plague that Moses had predicted, Pharoah let the Hebrews leave Egypt. Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt in a great movement known as the Exodus.

Biblical accounts say... On Mount Sinai God appeared to the entire people. Then Moses climbed to the top of the mountain. It was there, according to the Bible, that god gave him the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are laws by which the people of Israel were to live their lives. The Hebrews promised to obey the Ten Commandments and called themselves the "Chosen People", because God had given them written rules to follow.

It took many years, the Bible tells us forty, before the Hebrews reached Canaan, the "Promised Land". During their wanderings in the desert many wanted to return to Egypt, because they forgot about their sufferings and only remembered the fleshpots of Egypt. But most of the people followed Moses all

the time. Moses died before the Hebrews managed to return to the land of their fathers. Joshua became the new leader. He settled the twelve tribes in mountains and hills of Palestine. The country had few natural resources. The soil was rocky and hard to grow crops. But the Hebrews loved the country, because it was their ancient homeland. They lived there for well over a thousand years, until their enemies expelled them. In our days, once again Jews live in this land and have a country of their own, the State of Israel.

UNIT 1

UNDERSTANDING JUDAISM

A. Sounds Introduced
   1. learn - ear
   2. know - kn
   3. tie - ie
   4. cities - ie

B. Vocabulary

1. contribution	10. synagogue
2. ethical	11. conduct
3. scholars	12. confession
4. Old Testament	13. observance
5. foundation	14. substitute
6. forbidden	15. holiday
7. eminent	16. refused
8. rabbi	17. plague
9. sabbath	18. cast

Religion is felt to be the ancient Hebrews' chief contribution to humanity. The faith of Judaism is widespread all over the world today and it has contributed the concept of monotheism to other world religions.

The worship of one God by the Hebrews is properly called ethical monotheism. Ethical monotheism places emphasis on the teaching of ethics (proper behavior) to all mankind.

The story of the Hebrews, their ideas and laws were collected by Jewish scholars and put into what we know as the Old Testament. The Old Testament has become the foundation for great religions throughout the world.

The Hebrews call the first five books of the Old Testament the Torah, or the Law of Moses. Torah scrolls are hand written on parchment by skillful scribes. They are kept in every synagogue and portions are read in Hebrew at prayer services.

The word synagogue is Greek, it means "place of assembly", where Jews gather for prayers, study and social activities. Services are held in many synagogues every morning and evening. The Jewish sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday after sunset. During the sabbath Jews are not supposed to work.

The holiest day of the year for Jews is called Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement. During Yom Kippur, Jews are supposed to fast for 24 hours, confess their wrong doings to God and ask for the forgiveness of their fellow men.

The Passover festival occurs in the spring. During the eight days of Passover Jews remember their ancestors' slavery in Egypt and God's help in making them free. On this holiday they eat "matzah"; unleavened bread. The Bible tells that after the tenth plague the Egyptians hurried them to leave and had no time to prepare bread as usual.

The observance of Hanukkah (the word means "dedication") occurs in the middle of winter. It reminds the Jews of the fight for the freedom of their religion, more than 2,000 years ago. They defeated the Syrians, recaptured the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, then got rid of the idols that were in the Temple. The dedication of the Temple is observed with the lighting of candles for eight days.

Since Hanukkah occurs near Christmas, many people, even some Jews, confuse the two holidays. But they have nothing in common. Hanukkah is a minor Jewish festival and it is observed only with candlelighting each evening.

The leader of the synagogue is called "rabbi", a Hebrew word that means "my master". The rabbi is not a priest, but a teacher of his people. Any Jew can become a rabbi if he studies Torah and other sacred books of Judaism for many years. Rabbis conduct prayer services, weddings, funerals -- but their most important task is teaching.

UNIT 2

ISLAM

A. Sounds Introduced
   1. new - ew
   2. few - ew
   3. key - ey

B. Vocabulary
   1. Islam
   2. Allah
   3. inspired
   4. vision
   5. pilgrimages
   6. economy
   7. persecuted
   8. plundered
   9. economically
   10. recite
   11. mosque

The development of Islam began about six hundred years after the birth of Jesus. Islam is the religion of the Moslems (Muslims). Early followers of Islam were of Arab background. A man named Mohammed (Muhammad) spread the word of Allah.

Allah is the name Moslems use for God. Like all the early people of the world, the Arabs were also believers in many gods. As Arabs adopted Islam, Mecca became the center of worship for the early Moslems. It continued to be the center until today.

Around 570 A.D., a man named Mohammed was born. Mohammed became a herder of camels, a shepherd, and a merchant. It was through his experience and travel across the deserts that Mohammed met men of Jewish and Christian religious ideas.

While asleep in a cave one day, Mohammed had a vision in which the angel Gabriel visited him. It was this visit that inspired Mohammed to spread the word of Allah. To the Moslem, Islam is the only true religion.

Mohammed was so excited by the vision that he rushed home to tell his wife. The story of Gabriel coming to Mohammed began to be told all over the land.

Mohammed set out to teach others not to worship idols, but to believe in the one true god, Allah. Mohammed's first converts to the faith of Islam were his relatives, friends, and some of the oppressed and persecuted no-bodies in Mecca.

In time, he acquired many other followers. The leaders in the city of Mecca were becoming upset over all the attention Mohammed began to stir up. Many were afraid people would stop making trips or pilgrimages to Mecca to worship idols.

The lack of pilgrimages could hurt the economy of the town. Trouble began when threats were made against Mohammed and his family. Mohammed was called a mad man and laughed at by people. His followers were persecuted and also threatened with death.

Mohammed took his family and fled to the nearby town of Medina. Here in Medina, Mohammed and his followers were welcomed. For ten years, Mohammed gathered followers and plundered through the Arabian deserts. After ten more years, Mohammed returned to Mecca with this followers.

Mecca became the major center of worship for Moslems. Others, hearing of Mohammed and his message, began to make pilgrimages to Mecca to worship. Renewed interest in Mecca started the town to grow economically once again. Because of this prosperity, converts to the Islamic faith grew rapidly.

The sacred book of Islam is called the Koran (Qur'an). The Koran was revealed to Mohammed in dreams through the period of 23 years. After the death of Mohammed, the Koran was collected. The Koran is as important to the Moslems as the Torah is to the Jews. A true follower of Islam must obey the teachings of the Koran faithfully.

A Moslem must follow the five pillars of Islam: (1) He must recite the creed, "I believe that there is no god but Allah, Mohammed is his prophet; (2) he must pray five times each day, always facing the city of Mecca; (3) during the year, the Moslem must fast for one month. The month is called Ramadan. The fasting is complete abstinence from food, drinks, smoking, or sex. It starts every day in the month about two hours before sunrise and ends at sunset; (4) if at all possible, a Moslem is supposed to help the poor; (5) he should make a pilgrimage to the holy town of Mecca once in his lifetime, if he can afford it physically and economically.

The place of worship for the modern day Moslem is called a mosque, but is acceptable for the Moslem to pray in any clean place. In the Koran, the use of idols, altars, or pictures in the mosque is forbidden. Other laws of the Koran forbid the Moslems from mistreating their fellowmen.

There is a law in the Koran which allows a Moslem to marry up to four wives based on need and justice. Laws prohibiting followers of Islam from gambling and drinking are also observed in the Koran.

The religion of Islam spread after the death of Mohammed. Today, there are millions of followers of Islam all over the world.

Moslems became great scholars and contributed much to our civilization. During the crusades or "Holy Wars" of Europe, it was travels made into the Moslem world that awakened Europeans to Eastern culture.

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MOHAMMED (Muhammad)

A. Sounds Introduced
   1. learn - ear
   2. know - kn

B. Vocabulary
   1. inspiration
   2. converted
   3. caravans
   4. leisure
   5. pondered
   6. revelation
   7. deities
   8. trance
   9. receptive
   10. assassinate
   11. truce
   12. mediator
   13. arbitrator
   14. criticized
   15. finance

In this unit we will read and study about Mohammed (Muhammad), the founder of Islam, one of the largest religions in the world today. You will see how this one person received inspiration from God and then went out and converted all of Arabia to his new religion.

It was not an easy struggle. Mohammed was nearly killed several times. His ideas and beliefs were not popular at first. But let us start this story at the beginning.

Mohammed was born in the year 570 in a city called Mecca (Makka). He came from a well-to-do family but his father died before he was born. His mother also died while he was still a child (6 years old). This small, orphaned boy was now raised by a grandfather, then an uncle. Mohammed had a happy boyhood. He accompanied his uncle on camel caravans from their native town of Mecca to Syria, Northern Arabia, Yemen, and Southern Arabia.

During his travels, about the age of 18, or even earlier, he gained experiences in trade, in addition to his early work as a shepherd. He met a rich widow named Khadijah when he was 25. She had money invested in the camel trade and hired Mohammed to be her business manager. He was a shrewd businessman. Even though Khadijah was 15 years older than him, they eventually got married and raised four daughters. They had only one son who died as a baby.

During his 20's and early 30's, Mohammed was not a particularly religious man. However, he did have a lot of leisure time due to his wife's wealth. During his free time, Mohammed often pondered the purpose of human life. He was bothered by the poverty of his people and the fact that they were always having bloody tribal wars.

In his late thirties, he began to spend entire days and nights alone on a mountain near Mecca meditating, fasting, and seeking some revelation of the true values of life. Most civilized nations at that time had some spiritual belief such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, but the Arabs were worshipping countless, demon-like deities, that were supposed to live within them. They had a small, square temple in Mecca called Ka'ba, which had over 360 idols. These idols bothered Mohammed. He wanted the Arabs to find a single invisible God that would make them more equal to the civilized nations.

Mohammed concentrated so hard that he fell into a trance and a messenger of God, the angel Gabriel, appeared to him. Mohammed felt that he had been called by the One God to become his prophet to all the tribes of Arabia and all men. In a state of excitement, he went home and told Khadijah what had happened. She believed him and became his first convert; she gave him all the support he needed.

However, Mohammed had a huge mission ahead of him. He was over forty years old now. He continued to get visits from the angel Gabriel for the next 23 years of his life. Eventually, he realized that the messages he was receiving were really chapters (the Muslims call then Suras) of a book. These messages were quickly written down by his friends and they became the holy book of Islam, the Koran.

Most people were not very receptive to the new ideas of Mohammed. He attacked the idol worshippers of Mecca. If he had not belonged to the leading family of a powerful tribe, there is little doubt that he and his chatter of one god would have met their death.

Many people, especially, non-Muslims, believe that he was so frightened for his life that he publically compromised in his faith and accepted the belief in one of their Goddesses. He was very sorry for this act and later reported that the words he had spoken were not his but those of Satan.

After ten years, Mohammed had only a little more than one hundred converts. His uncle, Abu Talib, the head of the family to which Mohammed belonged, urged him to give up this religion. But he convinced his uncle to stand by him. Although he was not converted to Mohammed's faith, Abu Talib continued the support of his nephew. Mohammed taught his followers to be just, patient, and kind. He preached hard work, the brotherhood and equality of all men. He confirmed the belief in One God, Allah, and in the Day of Judgement.

Both drinking and gambling were sins according to his code. He also preached against the practice of killing unwanted female babies which was the practice of some tribal Arabs. He demanded the giving of alms to the poor.

Around 50 years of age, his hair, neither straight nor curly, had turned grey. Mohammed, even though he was aging, kept his spirit up. It was at this time that several things happened to him that affected his thoughts and influences.

The first of these events was the death of his wife, Khadijah. Her death left many of his emotions on the loose. Soon after her death, his uncle Abu Talib died. Their deaths increased Mohammed's faith. His hatred of idols also increased and soon his life in Mecca was in real danger.

The city of Medina, 247 miles away to the North of Mecca, had a large Jewish population who accepted the idea of belief in one god. Before Mohammed and his followers could leave this city, he had to outwit a plot to assassinate him by hiding three days in a cave south of Mecca. The date of his departure from Mecca to Medina, July 16, 622, is known as the Hegira or flight. This date represents the beginning of the lunar calendar that is used by all the Muslim countries. (It is important for the followers of Mohammed to be called Muslims rather than Muhammadans.)

When Mohammed reached Medina, he was met be a small but enthusiastic group of supporters. The city was in a temporary truce between two clans who were fighting for control of the city. Mohammed was asked to be mediator. Mohammed settled the dispute and soon found himself in the position of sole arbitrator and judge of all disputes.

It was at this point that historians began to notice a change in Mohammed's character. He was getting deeply involved in politics. He formed his own party for support and raided caravans carrying goods to Mecca. When they refused to give Medina its share in the caravan trade, he realized how important it was to finance his party besides preaching. He gained the support of the two tribes of Medina. However, everything Mohammed did was justified through messages he received from Allah, the one god.

It was not long before Mohammed had hundreds of followers. But the turning point in Mohammed's crusade came when he received the message from the angel Gabriel that Allah wanted him to spread the faith even by fighting if the enemies tried to stop him. In an early battle, Mohammed defeated with 300 men an army of 900 sent against him by the Meccans. This military victory was followed by another war in which Mohammed was defeated. But the battles continued until he finally gained victory over Meccans, only one year before he died.

When the Jews in Medina refused to accept him as the prophet of God, he turned against them. He fought against some of them and drove some others out of the city of Medina. Some historians have criticized him and think he changed his attitude after he came to power.

Mohammed's dream of conquering and uniting all the Arabian tribes was being carried out. His followers now believe that the greatest glory that could come to themselves and their families was to die fighting in the cause of God, the holy war (Jihad). Mohammed was attempting to carry this "holy war" beyond the borders of Arabia when he died at the age of 63.

Within one hundred years after his death, his followers had conquered in the name of "One God and Mohammed his Prophet" a good half of the known world. This accomplishment was indeed an amazing feat for one man who had only about 100 converts during his first ten years of preaching!

UNIT 3

CHRISTIANITY

A. Sounds Introduced
   1. quick - qu
   2. fare - are
   3. sung - ung
   4. key - ey
   5. bought - ought
   6. fox - ox

B. Vocabulary

1.	savior	15.	discontentment
2.	related	16.	resistance
3.	disciples	17.	dismissed
4.	treason	18.	monastery
5.	opposition	19.	excommunicated
6.	crucify	20.	influence
7.	resurrection	21.	virtues
8.	eternal	22.	devout
9.	acquired	23.	pamphlet
10.	apostles	24.	heir
11.	corrupt	25.	infancy
12.	committed	26.	dissolved
13.	justify	27.	dilemma
14.	injustices	28.	supreme

Christianity is the religion which claims that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. He was both God and man who came into the world to rescue sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. The record of Jesus' life and his teachings is related in the New Testament of the Bible. The Old Testament formed the foundation for most of what he taught.

Following Jesus' baptism he began his public ministry. He traveled through the cities and countryside proclaiming the Kingdom of God. He taught the happy rule of God in the lives of all who would believe and follow him. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He taught that the greatest commandments were two in number: to love God with all your being and to love your neighbor as yourself.

The chief priests feared Jesus' teachings, claims to messiahship, and popularity. They thus sought to silence him, though some religious leaders secretly believed in him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, was offered thirty pieces of silver to turn on his master. When Jesus was tried before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, the chief priests incited the crowd to accuse Jesus of treason and stirring up opposition against the Romans and by claiming to be a king.

Pilate could not find fault with Jesus. He yielded to the pressure of the crowd and ordered Jesus beaten and crucified. Jesus was nailed on a wooden cross with a sign above his head reading, "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews." Two religious leaders, secret believers, prepared Jesus' body for burial and placed Jesus in a tomb. The third day following Jesus' death, he arose from the dead, as he had promised his disciples. The New Testament records that over a 40 day period Jesus showed himself to his followers numerous times, even to a group of 500 people.

Jesus' resurrection transformed his disciples from a defeated little band of Jewish followers to an agressive team of apostles who took Jesus' message to the entire known world - whoever would believe and recieve Jesus Christ as their saviour from sin would obtain eternal life and would also experience the resurrection from the dead.

Early Christians began to call themselves Catholics, meaning universal, because all people of Western Europe belonged to one chuch. The official name of the church was the Roman Catholic Church because its center was in Rome. People looked to the church for guidance. The church acquired great power over the people of Europe.

As happens so often in history, power tends to corrupt people and institutions. Eventually, many Europeans became dissatisfied with how the church was acquiring its wealth. The church took tributes from kings and lords in the form of land and money. It required that people pay a separate tax for the building of churches.

Finally, the church collected money for indulgences. Indulgences were paid for sins that had been committed. It was taught by the church that God would forgive you if you paid for your forgiveness. This payment of money would justify the sinner in the eyes of God as well as in the eyes of the common man.

These injustices caused many people to question the sacraments of the church. The Catholic Church was very strict about its teachings. A questioning of the teachings of the church was known as heresy. Persons charged with heresy against the church could be put to death.

Discontentment continued to grow within the Catholic Church. Resistance came from a young monk living in a monastery in the town of Wittenberg, Germany. His name was Martin Luther. Luther was a faithful Roman Catholic teaching directly from the scriptures of the Bible.

Luther had written that the church made many mistakes. He felt that man still could get into heaven without buying indulgences. Luther said that faith was the most important virtue a human being needed to get to heaven. Luther was determined to be heard, so he posted ninety-five oppositions to the sale of indulgences on the door of the Wittenberg church.

Martin Luther challenged anyone to disagree with him, by showing otherwise in the Bible. Luther continued to preach his beliefs throughout Germany. In 1521, the pope excommunicated (kicked out) Martin Luther from the Roman Catholic Church.

All of Germany was in an uproar over Luther's writings. Luther, while in hiding, translated the New Testament into German, so all men could read and understand the scriptures. Eventually, Martin Luther had to come out of hiding to help restore order in the riot-torn towns.

His teachings and sermons were to influence the era of reformation, or change, in the church throughout the world. The ideas of Martin Luther spread rapidly. Martin Luther and other people who protested against the Roman Catholic Church became known as Protestants. The first people to spread the ideas of Luther were the Swiss.

The Swiss lived in the country of Switzerland. The most prosperous city in Switzerland was Zurich. It was in Zurich, in 1519, that a priest named Ulrich Zwingli began to preach the teachings of Luther.

Without totally challenging the church, Zwingli tried to raise the virtues of his followers. He preached against the sale of indulgences and encouraged the people to simplify the scriptures.

Zwingli was much stricter than Luther in establishing his beliefs. He did not want his followers to sing songs in church. Zwingli also objected to any statues or crucifixes within the church or homes of his followers. He turned the city of Zurich into a very strict Protestant center of worship.

Another Protestant leader named John Calvin, also emerged around this time, John Calvin was born in France in 1509. He went to Paris to study for the priesthood. Here he was told by his father to leave the priesthood. He was sent by his father to study law.

While studying law, Calvin began to read more humanistic writings which influenced him to become involved with church reformers. Calvin was much more interested in the church than in law and started to write about his beliefs.

He agreed with Luther that the Bible was much more important than what was taught by the established church. John Calvin felt that man could get to heaven without the church. He believed that people who were going to heaven already at birth had been selected. Calvin's belief was called predestination.

The reform of the church in England did not have a religious leader such as Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli. Instead, the change of the church in England began at the throne.

Sitting on the throne of England in 1509 was a man called Henry the Eighth. Henry the Eighth was a devout Roman Catholic. He even objected to Luther's beliefs and wrote a pamphlet against them.

After Henry became king, he married a woman named Catherine, daughter of King Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Catherine was five years older than Henry and had been married to his older brother. When Henry's brother died, he wanted to improve relations with Spain by marrying Catherine.

Church laws did not allow this so Henry asked the Pope to make an exception so that he could marry Catherine. The church agreed and Catherine and Henry were married. The marriage went well for about ten years, until trouble started between Spain and England.

Aside from this, Catherine was becoming very religious. In 1527, Henry fell in love with a woman named Anne Boleyn. Henry was not happy with Catherine because she had not given him a son who could serve as heir to the throne. All but one of their children had died during infancy. That child was a daughter named Mary.

Henry ordered the church to declare his marriage to Catherine illegal. Now, if the church dissolved Henry's marriage to Catherine, the Pope would have to over-rule what the previous Pope had agreed to. This would make the church look bad in the eyes of its' followers, since marriages were supposed to last forever.

To make matters even worse for Henry, Catherine's nephew was Charles the Fifth. Charles the Fifth ruled over the Netherlands and his people were the best customers of English merchants.

Charles threatened violence upon Italy if the Pope agreed to dissolve his aunt's marriage to Henry the Eighth. The Pope was put in a dilemma. He didn't want to anger either ruler so he did nothing. Henry ignored the Pope and threatened English churchmen with heavy fees if they didn't meet his request.

He dismissed the cardinal in England and appointed a new Archbishop of Canterbury. Henry made his new archbishop declare the first marriage illegal and then Henry married Anne Boleyn.

The Pope excommunicated Henry from the Catholic Church. This action by the Pope angered Henry. He had Parliament, the English government, pass two laws. One law made his divorce from Catherine legal and the second set up the Church of England; this law was known as the Act of Supremacy.

The Church of England was now called the Anglican Church. Henry was the supreme head. Henry appointed all church officials. They swore loyalty to him, not the Pope. He dissolved or closed all the monasteries in England. All the lands owned by the monasteries went to the throne.

Henry did not challenge the teachings of the church, but instead took the power of the Pope out of England. The actions of Henry started the way for reform of the church in England.

After Henry's death, Mary was crowned queen. She wanted a return of the Catholic faith to England. A battle between the new followers of the Anglican church in England and faithful Catholics began.

MODERN CHANGES IN RELIGION

A. Sounds Introduced
1. out - ou 2. hear - ear 3. knit - kn

B. Vocabulary

1. traditions	11. donation	21. rejected
2. fashion	12. electronic	22. rigorous
3. agenda	13. literature	23. commitment
4. hymn	14. sermon	24. affectionate
5. surrounding	15. communes	25. reflect
6. dramatic	16. spiritual	
7. competition	17. slogans	
8. automation	18. erase	
9. structure	19. rallied	
10. cassette	20. dedicated	

Today, religion has undergone what one might call a facelift. To encourage people to return to the church, many old traditions have gone by the wayside. People are welcomed into church in whatever fashion they please.

The Bible is not the only book from which man takes his daily rituals any longer. Church members don't have to bring their children. Churches also provide babysitting services for their members.

Church members are given an agenda of events that occur in order while seated in church. The music in church is not always the traditional hymns about God. Instead songs such as, "We Are Family", and "What The World Needs Now Is Love", are frequently heard.

The music is not just from an organ or piano, but there might be a whole orchestra or band. Church service is not an entire Sunday filled with sermons; Sunday church services may now be only an hour or forty-five minutes long, with songs in between to complete the worship.

There are more social activities surrounding the church today. Ski trips, journeys to Disneyland, summer camps, and church baseball teams have all become part of religion.

The most dramatic change in religion has been the competition of different faiths to attract followers. Modern religion has been pushed into the age of "what's happening." Churches have also begun the task of building not only their own colleges, but hospitals and cities as well.

Television and the age of automation have paved the way for "electronic religion." The worship of God no longer has to occur inside a church building. People can now sit at home, turn their televisions on, and worship. If there is something a worshipper doesn't understand, a number will be flashed against the screen, toll-free for them to call for an explanation. If they are really "moved" by the sermon, they may now write or call for a copy of the sermon. A copy or recorded cassette will be sent to them for a small donation.

The telephone has been used as a daily service to provide people with regular messages. Churches make sure they have your mailing address so that all postage-free church literature will reach you.

Free gifts such as tie-pins, slogan buttons, pamphlets and calendars are given away by certain church organizations. An entire family such as Oral Roberts, or Rex Humbard might host a regular church program, allowing each member to participate.

Recently young people have become very involved in religion. The birth of the "Jesus Movement", in America is said to have begun with the decline of the "hippie movement" of the 1960's.

Youth across the nation were pulled together in communes, living and breathing a re-birth of Jesus. It was a spiritual revolution that did not just occur over night. Many youths had just "burnt" themselves out with drugs and sex. They were seeking an inner self-strenghening religion. Slogans started to appear, such as "I'm stoned on Jesus, I feel like I'm floating all the time, with Jesus."

Certain young people returning from war in Vietnam needed something solid to erase all the bad memories of lives being wasted. On all the streets of America, young people rallied and marched for Jesus. Strangely enough, many youths in this revolution were genuine in their devotion to Jesus.

Parents of children who joined the Jesus Revolution were frightened at first. Some thought the youths of America had found a new "drug" and were spaced-out. Others were pleased that their children were not taking drugs, but instead, sincerely dedicated to Jesus.

Runaways, children on drugs, and dropouts are being converted to follow a "straight life" they once rejected. The Jesus Revolution has not stopped. Youth of today are still gathering converts to Jesus.

There are young people fellowship groups organized within some churches. Young people are marrying reborn Christian converts, getting blue-collar jobs, and reading the Bible daily in their homes.

Finally, some mention should be made about the recent growth of cults. A cult, according to definition, is a system or community of religious worship. However, a cult is different than a religion such as the Catholic Church. A cult demands obsessive devotion to a person or an ideal.

Cults, such as the Hare Krishna Movement, require rigorous commitments from persons wanting to join. Followers of Sun Myung Moon (Moonies), requires that a commitment be given to sacrifice, "give up" everything, for the "family". For instance, the possibility of marriage may have to be sacrificed.

True cult members, upon joining, turn over their personal belongings like cars, bank accounts, stocks, and even the deeds to their homes. All ties to the outside world are released. Family ties are also broken.

In the Hare Krishna cult, children are considered a problem. Members are not totally affectionate toward the young children. The children of Hare Krishna members are separated from their parents to divide the family bond. The only bond of love is to be that of loving God.

There are other cults that have influenced their members to commit acts of violence. In 1969, a cult led by Charles Manson murdered actress Sharon Tate and friends. Recently, the Jim Jones' Guyana mass suicide has been seen as a violent cult.

We have discussed several recent changes in modern religion. It is likely that religion will continue to change in the future to reflect the changing ways of society ahead of us.